



A Garden of Curricula for Early Childhood Educators



Get involved in the *Let's Move!* campaign to raise a healthier generation of kids. Incorporate a nutrition and physical activity component into daily activities & adopt one of the many curricula specially designed for preschool classrooms. LuAnn Wood, vice president of Lakeview Child Center, explored and suggests six curricula for preschool directors seeking to find a curriculum that will fit their program.

1. **Healthy Start** – a 12-unit curriculum centered on the child, environment, and family. *Healthy Start* helps ensure that the roots of a healthy lifestyle are planted firmly when it matters most -- early childhood. Children discover concepts and practice behaviors through stories, songs, rhymes, art projects and activities. Topics include eating for health, enjoying active play every day, getting along with others, feeling good about “me,” safety and care of the body, saying no to drugs and smoking, taking care of the environment and staying safe in the sun (<http://www.healthy-start.com>).
2. **CATCH Early Childhood (CEC) It's Fun to Be Healthy Binder and Activity Box** - is designed to nurture a love of healthy eating habits & activity in children ages three to five. CEC helps provide an environment where physical activity, health education and proper nutrition are valued & encouraged. CEC includes nine classroom lessons that encourage healthy eating and activity as well as Parent Tip Sheets with coloring activities, recipe ideas, and additional information (www.CATCHinfo.org).
3. **NEAT Solutions for Healthy Children – Early Sprouts, Cultivating Healthy Food Choices in Young Children** – a 24-week curriculum teaches preschoolers about nutrition with the goal of increasing children's taste preferences for veggies. The “seed-to-table” approach combines gardening, sensory explorations, recipes, and family involvement to promote healthy eating during the early years when children's food choices are being established (www.earllysprouts.org).
4. **Learning About Nutrition Through Activities (LANA)** - the preschool program includes six, week-long theme units offered once each month in place of a program's regular weekly curriculum. These theme units provide a special focus on fruits and veggies by including related stories and classroom activities in addition to the weekly cooking and tasting activities. The theme units also provide family resources to help connect families with program messages. (<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/chp/cdrr/nutrition/nutritioneducation/lan/index.html>).
5. **Grow It, Try It, Like It** - a garden-themed nutrition education kit for child care center staff that introduces children to three fruits (peaches, strawberries, and cantaloupe) and three veggies (spinach, sweet potatoes, and crookneck squash). Each set of lessons contains hands-on planting and nutrition education activities. In addition, there are fun parent/child activities and family-sized recipes that give tips for cooking with children at home (<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/resources/growit.html>).
6. **Color Me Healthy** - a nutrition and physical activity program for preschoolers ages four and five. It uses color, music, and exploration of the senses to help children learn that healthy eating and physical activity are fun. It includes lesson plans, a music CD, and parent newsletters (www.colormehealthy.com).

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